

L E T T E R X V.

Livourno, October 2d.

No sooner were we beyond the gates, than we found ourselves in narrow roads, shut in by vines and grassy banks of canes and oziers, rising high above our carriage, and waving their leaves in the air. Through the openings, which sometimes intervene, we discovered a variety of hillocks, cloathed with shrubberies and verdure; ruined towers looking out of the bushes: not one without a romantic tale attending it. This sort of scenery lasted till, passing the baths, we beheld Pisa, rising from an extensive plain, the most open we had as yet seen in Italy, crossed by an aqueduct. We were set down immediately before the Duomo, which stands insulated in a verdant opening, and is by far the most curious and highly-finished edifice my eyes ever viewed. Don't ask of what shape, or architecture; it is almost impossible to tell, so great is the confusion of ornaments. The capitals of the columns and carving of the architraves, as well as the form of the arches, are evidently of Grecian design, but Gothic proportions. The dome gives the mass an oriental appearance, which helped to bewilder me; in short, I have dreamt of such buildings, but little thought they existed. On one side you survey the famous tower, as perfectly awry as I expected; on the other, the baptistery, a circular edifice, distinct from the church, and right opposite its principal entrance; crowded with sculptures, and topped by the strangest.

strangest of cupolas. Having indulged my curiosity with this singular prospect for some moments, we entered the cathedral, and admired the stately columns of porphyry, and the rarest marbles, supporting a roof, which, like the rest of the building, shines with gold. A pavement of the brightest mosaic compleats its magnificence: all around are sculptures by M. Ang. Buonaroti, and paintings by the most distinguished artists. We examined them all, and then walked down the nave, and remarked the striking effect of the baptistery, seen in perspective, through the bronze portals, which you know, I suppose, are covered with relievos of the finest workmanship. These noble valves were thrown wide open, and we passed between to examine the alabaster fount in the baptistery, constructed after the primitive ritual, and exquisitely wrought. Many palm-trees appear amongst the carved work, which seem to indicate the former connexions of the Pisanese with Palestine. Our next object was the Campo Santo, which forms one side of the opening in which the cathedral is situated. The walls, and gothic tabernacle above the entrance, rising from a level turf, appear as fresh, as if built within the century, and, preserving a neat straw-colour, have the cleanliest effect imaginable. Our guide unlocking the gates, we entered a spacious cloister, forming an oblong quadrangle, inclosing the sacred earth of Jerusalem, conveyed thither about the period of the crusades, in the days of Pisanese prosperity. The holy mould produces a rampant crop of weeds; but none are permitted to spring from the pavement, which is entirely composed of tombs with slabs and monumental inscriptions, smoothly laid. Ranges of slender pil-

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lars, formed of the whitest marble and glistening in the sun, support the arcades, which are carved with innumerable stars and roses, partly gothic, and partly saracenic. Strange paintings of hell and the devil, mostly taken from Dante's rhapsodies, cover the walls of these fantastic galleries, attributed to the venerable Giotto, and Bufalmacco, whom Boccaccio mentions in his Decamerone. Beneath, along the base of the columns, rows of Pagan sarcophagi are placed, to my no small surprise; as I could not have supposed the Pisanese sufficiently tolerant to admit profane sculptures within such consecrated precincts. However, there they are, as well as fifty other contradictory ornaments. I was quite seized by the strangeness of the place, and paced fifty times round and round the cloisters, discovering at every time, some odd novelty. When tired, I seated myself on a fair slab of giallo antico, that looked a little cleaner than its neighbours, (which I only mention to identify the precise point of view) and looking through the fillagreed covering of the arches, observed the domes of the cathedral, cupola of the baptistery, and roof of the leaning tower, rising above the leads, and forming the strangest assemblage of pinnacles, perhaps, in Europe. The place is neither sad, nor solemn; the arches are airy; the pillars light; and there is so much caprice, such an exotic look in the whole scene, that, without any violent effort of imagination, one might imagine one's self in fairy land. Every object is new; every ornament original: the mixture of antique sarcophagi, with gothic sepulchres, compleats the vagaries of the prospect, to which, one day or other, I think of returning, to act a visionary part, hear visionary music, and
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commune with sprites ; for I shall never find in the whole universe besides, so whimsical a theatre. It was between ten and eleven when we entered the Campo Santo, and one o'clock struck, before I could be persuaded to leave it ; and 'twas the sun which then drove me away ; whose heat was so powerful, that all the inhabitants of Pifa shewed their wisdom, by keeping within doors. Not an animal appeared in the streets, except five camels laden with water, stalking along a range of garden walls, and pompous mansions, with an awning before every door. We were obliged to follow their steps, at least, a quarter of a mile, before we reached our inn. Ice was the first thing I sought after, and when I had swallowed an unreasonable portion, I began not to think quite so much of the deserts of Africa, as the heat and the camels had induced me, a moment ago. Early in the afternoon, we proceeded to Livourno, through a wild tract of forest, somewhat in the style of our English parks. The trees, in some places, formed such shady arbours, that we could not resist the desire of walking beneath them, and were well rewarded ; for after struggling through a rough thicket, we entered a lawn, hemmed in by oaks and chestnuts, which extends several leagues along the coast, and conceals the prospect of the ocean ; but we heard its murmur. Nothing could be smoother or more verdant, than the herbage, which was sprinkled with daisies and purple crocuses, as in the month of May. I felt all the genial sensations of spring steal into my bosom, and was greatly delighted upon discovering vast bushes of myrtle, in bloom. The softness of the air, the sound of the distant surges, the evening gleams, and repose of the
landscape,

landscape, quieted the tumult of my spirits ; and I experienced the calm of my infant hours. I lay down in the open turf-walks between the shrubberies ; listlessly surveyed the cattle browsing at a distance, and the blue hills, that rose above the foliage and bounded the view. During a few moments I had forgotten every care ; but when I began to enquire into my happiness, I found it vanish. I felt myself without those I love most, in situations they would have warmly admired ; and, without them, these pleasant meads and woodlands were of little avail. On the contrary, they reminded me so strongly of their absence, that my joy was changed into tears. I looked earnestly at the distant hills, and sighed : I scattered the blossoms I had gathered, and cried out incessantly, Let us drive away. We had not left this woody region far behind, when the Fanalè began to lift itself above the horizon ; the Fanalè you have so often mentioned : the sky and ocean glowing with amber light, and the ships out at sea, appearing in a golden haze, of which we have no conception in our northern climates. Such a prospect, together with the fresh gales from the Mediterranean, charmed me : I hurried immediately to the port, and sat on a reef of rocks, listening to the waves, that broke amongst them.